

CHINA'S COVID-19 COVER-UP PLAYBOOK

In late 2019, a novel coronavirus, commonly referred to as COVID-19, began significant human-to-human transmission. COVID-19 reportedly originated in Wuhan, China, although the precise nature of its origin is still under review.¹

As the virus spread beyond its borders, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) suppressed crucial information, including information about human-to-human transfer, necessary to curb worldwide transmission. As of November 2021, the virus has spread to nearly every country and resulted in more than 254 million confirmed cases and at least 5 million COVID-19 related deaths.²

The House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) Republicans released a report examining the CCP's cover-up of the virus in September 2020. The report concluded "...it is clear CCP health officials and senior leadership had the information required, at a date early enough, to reduce China's COVID-19 cases by at least 86% compared to the estimated caseload at the end of February."³

The CCP's COVID-19 cover-up very closely echoes the strategy undertaken 17 years ago during the 2003 SARS outbreak. SARS "spread to 28 countries outside of [China], resulting in more than 8,000 cases and 774 known deaths."⁴ The China Task Force identified eight behaviors that the CCP engaged in to conceal the SARS and COVID-19 pandemics, as shown in the table below:

CCP Actions	SARS	COVID-19
Waited to inform the WHO?	✓	✓
Subsequently hid information from the WHO?	✓	✓
Hid their knowledge of the severity of the outbreak?	✓	✓
Disrupted press from reporting?	✓	✓
Response kept secret until after the Spring Festival travel season began?	✓	✓
Limited access of outside experts to epicenter of the outbreak?	✓	✓
Claimed the virus was under control?	✓	✓
Underreported number of cases?	✓	✓

China Task Force Report, June 2020⁵

Furthermore, HFAC Republicans found that the CCP "failed to heed" the lessons of the "International Health Regulations (IHR) that govern how countries are required to handle public health emergencies."⁶ Despite clear violations of international law and regulations referenced in the report, the World Health Organization (WHO) continues to defend the CCP's handling of COVID-19.

The CCP has a long history of concealing serious information to the detriment of every other country. Until they are held to the standards created because of their past cover-ups, they are destined to continue this deception.

¹ Graham Readfearn, *How did coronavirus start and where did it come from? Was it really Wuhan's animal market?* The Guardian (Apr. 27, 2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/08/how-did-coronavirus-start-and-where-did-it-come-from-was-it-really-wuhans-animal-market> and Andersen, K.G., Rambaut, A., Lipkin, W.I. *et al.* The proximal origin of SARS-CoV-2. *Nat Med* 26, 450–452 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0820-9>.

² The New York Times. “Coronavirus World Map: Tracking the Global Outbreak.” *The New York Times*, 18 Jan 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/world/covid-cases.html>.

³ *The Origins of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, Including the Roles of the Chinese Communist Party and the World Health Organization*, House Foreign Affairs Committee Minority Report, U.S. House of Representatives (September 21, 2020), at <https://gop-foreignaffairs.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Final-Minority-Report-on-the-Origins-of-the-COVID-19-Global-Pandemic-Including-the-Roles-of-the-CCP-and-WHO-9.20.20-Coverpage.pdf>

⁴ Pasley, James. “How SARS Terrified the World in 2003, Infecting More than 8,000 People and Killing 774.” *Business Insider*, 20 Feb. 2020, www.businessinsider.com/deadly-sars-virus-history-2003-in-photos-2020-2.

⁵ China Task Force Report, *Supra*, at 3.

⁶ *Id.*